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KOREA: NUTRITION AND FEEDING OF KOREAN ARMED FORCES

Report of Trip by Dr. John B. Youmans, Director of Field Studies
and Member of ICNND

Interdepartmental Committee on Nutrition for National Defense
March 1959

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National Institutes of Health
Bethesda, Maryland

Trip by Dr. John B. Youmans

Summary

In summary, the programs and progress in nutrition since the 1956 survey were discussed with U. S. and Korean officials and the status of the programs determined and evaluated. Details are presented in the following discussion and in the Annexes, together with a considerable amount of background material. It is concluded that an excellent organization and program in nutrition has been organized in the ROK Armed Forces and is being maintained. Some areas for improvement remain, are recognized and plans made for their effectuation. To a large measure the excellent program and performance has been the result of the work of the ROKA Food Advisor, Captain Lundy and his staff, the Korean offices and organizations concerned and the support given by higher authorities in the U. S. and Korean establishments. However, there exists the danger of interference and damage to the program with the proposal for withdrawal of MAP support for ROK Armed Forces subsistence and changes in ration procurement procedures. Excellent opportunity exists for the strengthening of laboratory support for the nutrition program (the laboratory facilities for the nutrition survey of 1956 were given by the U. S. Army's 406th Laboratory in Japan). A spot check of nutritional status seems desirable and the assignment of a U. S. Nutrition Officer for a period of 3-6 months is desirable and acceptable.

Recommendations

1. That immediate steps be taken to advise against the proposed shift of subsistence support from MAP funds to ICA (PL-480), to the extent at least of postponing such a change for one year to enable suitable arrangements to be made, if possible, to avoid injurious effects on the nutritional health of the troops.

2. That a U. S. Nutrition Officer be assigned for 3-6 months to the U. S. Military Advisory Mission, Korea.

3. That arrangements be made for a spot, abbreviated survey of nutrition of the Armed Forces, with the purpose particularly of supporting the maintenance of the program and implementing further improvement.

4. That support be given to improving laboratory support for the nutrition and feeding program.

5. That such assistance as may be possible and feasible be given to the National Defense Science Laboratory and the ROK Army Food Laboratory in the way of needed equipment and library facilities.

Discussions with
PROVMAAG-K

I arrived in Korea at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, March 20th, and was met by Maj. Gen. David H. Buchanan, Chief, Joint Military Assistance Advisory Group, Korea (PROVMAAG-K), Col. Santino Lerro, Senior Medical Advisor, Col. James E. Bradford, Senior Quartermaster Advisor, Maj. Gen. Kim Kae Won, the Quartermaster General (ROKA), Brig. Gen. Chung Ho Sup, the Surgeon General, ROKA, Capt. Roger T. Lundy, ROKA Food Advisor, and others.

After having lunch with Gen. Buchanan, we proceeded to PROVMAAG-K headquarters for a conference with the Comptroller, a representative of Supply (U.S.) and the Executive Officer. At this time I was informed of a pending change in the funding of rations for the Armed Forces, a matter which is discussed more fully below.

Korean Minister of
Defense

Following this conference a meeting was held with the Minister of National Defense, The Honorable Kim Chung Yul. The Minister of Defense referred to complaints in Parliament about the ration; in particular, the assertion that although it might be scientifically adequate, the provision of "side dishes," although serving to provide for vitamins and minerals, did not make up for a too small allotment of rice. Actually, the whole matter concerned the desire for more rice in the ration. In passing, it should be pointed out that two contradictory stories and statements were heard during the visit: One, that the people at home were complaining because the soldiers were not fed an adequate ration, and the other that the Army was fed well and the civilians were neglected, fed less well and underfed. The Minister was interested, cooperative and friendly and offered full cooperation.

U.S. Ambassador

This visit was followed by one to the United States Ambassador, The Honorable Walter C. Dowling.

Mr. Dowling was familiar with the reports of the survey teams and well acquainted with Dr. R. R. Williams, Director of the ICNND Korea nutrition survey, 1956. He was interested and cordial. I discussed briefly the possible change in funding the part of the ration currently paid for from Mutual Assistance Program funds and the impact it would have on the feeding and possibly on the nutrition of the ROK Armed Forces as well as on the Korean economy. Mr. Dowling appeared to have a good grasp of the situation.

C/C U.N. Command

The visit to the Ambassador was followed by one to Gen. George H. Decker, Commander-in-Chief, U. N. Command, Commander U. S. Forces in Korea and Chief of Staff, Eighth Army. Gen. Decker felt that conditions were satisfactory as regards nutrition of the ROK forces. He stated that a change would be made from a single supply system to direct divisional supply. This was in part due to deployment and the location of divisions in a relatively isolated manner which, according to him, made divisional supply, based largely on local procurement, preferable. Though this may have advantages from some points of view, it has in it the possibility of weakening the rationing and entire food service procedure to the possible detriment of the nutritional health of the troops.

KMAG Conference

On Saturday, March 21st, there was a conference with Maj. Gen. Willis S. Matthews, Chief, U.S. Army Advisory Group, Korea (KMAG). Gen. Matthews assured me of his interest in the program. A meeting with Lt. Gen. Kim Chong Oh, Vice Chief of Staff, ROKA, followed. Others present included Maj. Gen. Kim Ung So, Deputy Chief of Staff for Logistics (Former QM General), Lt. Gen. Song Yo Chan, Chief of Staff, Col. Santino J. Lerro (U.S.), Senior Medical Advisor, Col. James C. Bradford, Senior Quartermaster Advisor (U.S.), Maj. Gen. Kim Kae Won, the Quartermaster General, ROKA and Capt. Roger J. Lundy, ROKA Food Advisor.

Again, the matter of new funding of rations for the ROK Armed Forces was presented and Maj. Gen. Kim Ung So presented forcibly the effect of this on the Korean economy and particularly on the feeding and nutrition of the troops.

KMAG - ROKA
Conference

Following this there was a joint KMAG and ROKA conference on the ROKA food program. Those attending were:

Dr. John B. Youmans
Brig. Gen. An, Kwang Ho, Chief, Logistics Bureau,
MND
Maj. Gen. Kim, Ung So, Deputy C/S for Logistics,
ROKA
Maj. Gen. Kim, Kae Won, TQMG
Brig. Gen. Chung, Hi Sup, Surgeon General, ROKA
Brig. Gen. Chang, Took Sung, Surgeon General,
Air Force
Col. Chung, Su Uck, Surgeon General, Marine Corps
Col. Kim, Hyung Duck, Deputy QM General
Col. Min, Tal Sick, Chief, Subsistence Division,
OQMG
Col. James C. Bradford, Sr. QM Advisor, ROKA
Col. Gustaf A. Engstrom, Office of the Sr. QM
Advisor
Col. Santino J. Lerro, Sr. Medical Advisor, ROKA
Lt. Col. Kim, Pyung Zoo, Chief, Food Laboratory,
ROKA
Maj. Ivan S. Alio, Preventive Medicine Advisor
Capt. Roger J. Lundy, Food Advisor, ROKA
Capt. Kim, Chae Hee, Food Advisor, ROKA
Capt. Kang, So Tong, Food Advisor, ROKA
Dr. Hu Kum, Chief, National Chemical Laboratories
Dr. Choe, Yei Suck, Deputy Chief, National Chemical
Laboratories
Mr. Lee, Tai Myung, Food Service Section, National
Defense Science Laboratory

The KMAG Food Advisor, Captain Lundy, conducted the discussion, which included the following subjects:

- (1) Prior recommendations of the ICNND and actions taken.
- (2) Organization and operation of ROKA Food Program.
- (3) Training status of Food Service personnel.
- (4) Menu planning, distribution and use.
- (5) Procurement and distribution of rations.
- (6) Comparisons of caloric and nutrient intake by ROKA troops in 1957, 1958 and 1959.
- (7) Authorization and status of Food Service equipment.
- (8) Combat rations.
- (9) Ration surveys.
- (10) Future programs.

The attached enclosures present data and illustrative material amplifying the verbal discussion. Of particular interest is the list of recommendations of the survey committee of 1956, with statements regarding the action taken in implementing each recommendation (Enclosure 1). It is most significant that all but one of the recommendations have been implemented completely or in large part. Only the request for special food allowance to hospital patients has failed, having been repeatedly turned down by the ROK Congress due to insufficient funds in the Korean budget.

Following the presentation I expressed strong approval of the present troop feeding program which I believe is the best organized and conducted of any I had seen in the countries visited, and complimented the staff, U.S. and Korean, on their accomplishments. I also emphasized the need to maintain and strengthen the program.

U.S. PL-480
MAP Subsistence
Support

At a luncheon in my honor given by Paik Sun Chin to a representative group of U.S. and Korean officers and officials concerned with nutrition and feeding, Mr. Kim Chung Yul, Minister for National Defense, made a formal presentation of the proposed change in funding the ration for the Korean Armed Forces, which has been referred to above. The details of this are presented in the attached Annexes 1 and 2, prepared by the Acting UNC Economic Coordinator of the Ministry of National Defense and the Ministry of National Defense, Republic of Korea. In detail, it was proposed to shift subsistence from FY 1960 Military Assistance Program and include it in the Economic Aid Program (PL-480). MAP-supported subsistence consists of 16 items, including soybeans, biscuit ingredient, edible oil, red pepper bean mash and canning material (tin plate) and edible oil. This assistance is said to represent 20 percent of over-all calories and 65 percent of the side dish, a total reduction of 780 calories per day if eliminated. The predicted effect on the overall Korean economy and on the nutrition of the troops is described in Annex 2. Annex 1, prepared by the Acting UNC Economic Coordinator, sets forth the effect of the above shift on Korean Economy and the ROK defense effort, pointing out that it would be practical only in the event that additional funds become available under the Defense Support Program and PL-480, both for dollar imports and to generate the local currency necessary to cover processing costs. The present and foreseeable budgetary and foreign exchange situation is such as to preclude any substantial additional burden in support of ROK defense effort without prejudicing the country's economic development and U. S. economic objectives in Korea. The memorandum proceeds to outline a means of accomplishing such a shift in a gradual manner, over the years 1960-64. I was told that despite the proposal the fiscal office of PROVMAAG-K was proceeding to program for this subsistence support for 1960 as in previous years.

In discussing this presentation, I expressed concern that the nutritional health of the Korean Armed Forces might be adversely affected by a rapid implementation of the proposed action and stated that I would discuss the matter with persons concerned in Korea and the U. S. with a view to recommending actions to be taken.

Following the luncheon, a meeting was held with Porter A. Stephens, Chief of Sanitation, Health and Sanitation Division, Office of Economic Control, regarding the proposed cancellation of MAP support for subsistence furnished to the ROK Armed Forces and, in particular, the capability of OEC providing support in the event the action was taken. Unfortunately, Mr. Stephens was unable to give any firm opinion or information. It is to be regretted that Mr. William E. Warne, the Economic Coordinator, could not be present or be reached, since he was absent from the city. (Miss Bertha Strange, TC-AG-Ex, Miss Leona D. McCloud and Miss Lee Yong Ok, dietitians and food specialists, also were present. They were not concerned with the matter of MAP support for Korean subsistence but did present for information and discussion some aspects of the nutrition of civilians, including certain views of civilians on Armed Forces nutrition and feeding.)

Laboratories and Ration Distribution

There followed a visit to the ROK Army Food Laboratory, the 10th Field Buying Office and the National Defense Science Laboratory. The ROK Army Food Laboratory is very poorly housed in an old building with no running water or heat, dirt floors and very limited equipment (110 volt, 60 cycle AC current), but with a devoted staff who are accomplishing some creditable work under great handicaps. The Laboratory is judged not suitable to house facilities for a survey team or for the permanent installation of equipment, though aid in improving equipment would be very helpful.

The 10th Field Buying Office is an example of the units established for procurement, with similar offices distributed throughout the country. Storage, weighing, issue, etc., were observed, with the loading of food for transport to the respective units. All practices were felt to be at a very good level of excellence. Some of the food was sampled and found good. There apparently is a possibility that the change to direct divisional procurement may adversely affect this effective organization.

The National Defense Science Laboratory is housed in a new, well designed and constructed building and well equipped with modern apparatus. They would appreciate help in receiving journals for their library. They have \$2,000 from the Asia Foundation for this purpose for one year only and few continuing funds. They would also like to get catalogues of apparatus and laboratory supplies and utilities. The work of the laboratory in developing dehydrated foods and operational rations was especially valuable and promising. There is a good staff and it would seem to be the place to locate a laboratory for a survey team or in which to give assistance in establishing a permanent nutrition laboratory. In essence, the staff is military, as is control.

On Monday, March 23rd, a visit was paid to the National Chemistry Laboratories at 8:30. The National Chemistry Laboratories are in the Ministry of Health. They are located in an older building in downtown Seoul, but with considerable space (some crowding) and reasonably well equipped. Some new modern apparatus could be added with benefit. A considerable program of research is conducted together with service activities. The Director is Dr. Haw and his Assistant Director is Dr. Chai, who has a book on nutrition in page proof. Dr. Yu is head of the nutrition section. He was trained at the University of Wisconsin with Dr. Elvehjem. In addition to service work and research the staff does considerable teaching in the University, including graduate students working in their laboratories.